

REMARKS

Initially, Applicant would like to express appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided, for the acknowledgment of Applicant's Claim for Priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document, and for the acknowledgment of Applicant's Information Disclosure Statement by return of the Form PTO-1449.

Upon entry of the above amendment, claim 1 will have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1-2 are currently pending. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the outstanding rejection and allowance of claims 1-2 in the present application. Such action is respectfully requested and is now believed to be appropriate and proper.

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-2 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by SATO (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2001/0026072). The Examiner takes the position that SATO discloses a carrier mounting structure including a carrier 40, a bumper cover 21, and a plurality of knobs 51a, 52a connected to the bumper cover. The Examiner further states that the term "integral" is sufficiently broad to embrace connections including fasteners and welding.

Although Applicant does not necessarily agree with the Examiner's rejection of the claims on this ground, nevertheless, Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clearly obviate the above noted ground of rejection in order to expedite prosecution of the present application. In this regard, Applicant notes that the SATO publication fails to show each and every element recited in the amended claim. In particular, claim 1, as amended, sets forth a carrier mounting structure including, inter alia, a carrier provided in front of an engine compartment of a car body; a bumper cover located below the carrier; "and a

plurality of knobs extending from a lower surface of the carrier, and connected to the bumper cover, wherein the knobs are formed integrally and in one piece with the carrier”.

This amendment is fully supported by the specification, including the claims and drawings, and no prohibited new matter has been added. In particular, support for the above amendment can be found at least in figures 4-6 and in the specification on page 4, lines 15-20; and on page 6, line 25 through page 7, line 1. The configuration of Applicant's claimed carrier mounting structure including the knobs that are formed integrally and in one piece with the carrier provides at least the advantage of improving the efficiency of assembly of the carrier mounting structure.

The SATO publication discloses a panel 40 in front of the engine compartment of a vehicle, a bumper cover 21, and front ends 51a, 52a of side frames 51, 52, respectively, that connect the panel 40 to the bumper cover 21. However, as clearly shown in figure 3 and as described in paragraph [0056], the side frames 51, 52 are “connected to” the panel 40. The side frames 51, 52 and the panel 40 are completely separate elements that are connected in some manner during assembly of the device. The side frames 51, 52 of the SATO device are not formed integrally and in one piece with the panel 40. Further, it is believed that the Examiner also takes the position that the side frames 51, 52 are not formed integrally and in one piece with the panel 40, since the Examiner stated in the rejection that “[I]t has been held that the term “integral” is sufficiently broad to embrace constructions united by such means as fastening and welding. Accordingly, it is believed that the Examiner also takes the position that the side frames 51, 52 and the panel 40 are not formed in one piece, but are separate elements that are connected at some point during assembly. In fact, the SATO publication discloses the type of prior art device which

Applicant has identified in the background section of the present application as including drawbacks and upon which Applicant has improved with the claimed carrier mounting structure. Thus, the SATO publication does not disclose a device including, inter alia, “a plurality of knobs extending from a lower surface of the carrier, and connected to the bumper cover, wherein the knobs are formed integrally and in one piece with the carrier”, as set forth in amended claim 1. Since the reference fails to show each and every element of the claimed device, the rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over SATO is improper and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that dependent claim 2, which is at least patentable due to its dependency from claim 1, for the reasons noted above, recites additional features of the invention and is also separately patentable over the prior art of record based on the additionally recited features.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 1-2.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the present amendment is proper and that none of the references of record, considered alone or in any proper combination thereof, anticipate or render obvious Applicant's invention as recited in claims 1-2. The applied references of record have been discussed and distinguished, while significant claimed features of the present invention have been pointed out.

Accordingly, consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present amendment and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

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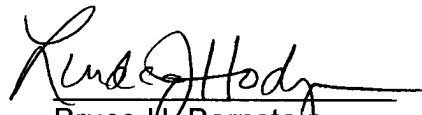
Applicant has made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believes that he has now done so.

Any amendments to the claims which have been made in this amendment, which do not narrow the scope of the claims, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered cosmetic in nature, and to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below listed number.

Respectfully submitted,
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May 24, 2006
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